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## She Heard Him With A Visible Emotion

Victoria Lane

*Wright State University - Main Campus*

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# Pride and Prejudice: The Student Blog

Thursday, March 7, 2013

## She Heard Him With A Visible Emotion

The short story “**The Force of Love**” (1791) calls attention to the inherent danger which belies a desirous passion toward the opposite sex. The short story follows two ardent lovers who fatally lose the battle against their passion for one another. The story functions as a moral tale in which it is of the utmost importance to revere one’s fortune, and virtue over the fickle nature of one’s passions. These lovers ultimately meet the fate of death as punishment for their irreverent and passionate behavior. Although Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* is regarded as one of the greatest love stories of all time, it is arguably devoid of such passion. This lack of passion a testament to one of the many paradoxes of Regency culture. *Pride and Prejudice* famously opens with the line, “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife,” likewise, the character in “*The Force of Love*” is single, has a large fortune and is without a wife; ideas which Austen tousles throughout the novel. Ultimately, this character from “*The Force of Love*” does secure a passion, which “he diligently concealed from everyone else.” He secures a wife, but loses his fortune. The young lady secures a passion for him which she “concealed [...] even from him” (Adams 2).

The young gentleman soon became enamoured of Adelaide, and soon made her acquainted with a passion, which he diligently concealed from every one else. She was far from being insensible to his merit, but was so much mistress of her passion, that she concealed it even from him.

The thematic parallels between the short story and Austen’s novel are a testament to the anxieties of the culture; the mother meddles in the son’s procurement of his lover; just as Mrs. Bennet obsesses over the prospect of marriage for all of her daughters. However, in contrast to Mrs. Bennet’s ardent and pushy nature to get her daughters wed, the mother of the male character avidly attempts to keep her son from marrying the young lady whom he has chosen. However, because they are parallels, one does not meet with the other, these stories do not intersect on the surface level. The difference in genre between a short story and a novel, though, allow them to function similarly, despite their differences. The characters of “*The Force of Love*” are described to have an “uncommon sprightliness and understanding” (Adams 1). Although Austen’s characters seem to maintain similar characteristics, Austen paints much more complicated characters. The layers which she incorporates the lives of the characters in *Pride and Prejudice* lead each to their own within the narrative. For example, Lizzy maintains a sprightly nature, which by virtue of the time should render her less desirable to a man of Darcy’s stature. However, like the character in “*The Force of Love*,” these qualities only function to attract him to his wife, and inevitable punishment. True, nobody dies in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, but that does not remove the inherent moral undertones of the novel. On the contrary, it further complicates them, and allows for a stronger critique of the Regency. By avoiding the implicit moral overtones as present in many other writings of the time, Austen is able to subtly critique the culture by engaging in a conversation with it through the literature she creates. In other words, Austen conceals the passion in the novel in order to effectively dodge the moral obligations of writers to punish those who do not abide by the moral standards which the society seeks to impose. For example, Lydia and Wickham function as the most overtly passionate characters in Austen’s novel and unlike the characters Adams creates; they do not meet a fate of death. They are instead rewarded for their actions; Wickham receives a payout and Lydia gains the attention of her mother along with a sense of entitlement with being the Mrs. to a Mr. Furthermore, the future union of the Elizabeth and Darcy rests on the passionate actions of Lydia and Wickham. In other words, Austen condones acts of passion without calling direct attention to them as a positive element within the narrative. Adams blatantly condemns it, despite the good natured intentions of his characters. Paradoxically, Adams overtly displays a passion which his characters seek to conceal, while Austen conceals a passion her characters seek to display.

### About

A blog site featuring original research by undergraduate students at Wright State University enrolled in Crystal B. Lal’s *Pride and Prejudice* (Spring 2011).

We hope you enjoy reading about the novel and historical contexts surrounding the famous novel. And be sure to participate in CELIA’s Bicentennial events on October 2013. Click [here](#) for more information.

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